2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
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Each Luo tribe (*piny*), constituting a the main, as has been said, with the present administrative location, was an autonomous political unit. As among the Nuer, one of the chief characteristics of a Luo tribe, and one by which its autonomy may be defined, is to be found in the different ways in which homicide was regarded and treated in pre-European days. There were local variations but in general the principle followed was that *not* compensation (a girl + cattle for a kinsman of the slain man to marry a wife with and raise him to his name,) was paid only for the killing of a fellow tribesman. Never was paid for killing men of another tribe in war, raids, or as an outcome of the ritual demonstration called *buru*,[1] for they were *wangre*, enemies, and a state of feud between the lineages involved, and sometimes of war between the two tribes, developed. Likewise no compensation could be paid for slaying a clansman, but atonement was made by the sacrifice of an ox, provided by the kin of the slayer and eaten by representatives of the whole clan, who might moreover insist on the slayer marrying a wife to the name of the dead man. The line of political cleavage between tribe and tribe thus ran through the points at which the obligation to pay compensation or make atonement for homicides ended for a particular group of people and it is so regarded by the Luo themselves. For example, when the Uyoma people and the Asembo people live in the same territory they paid compensation for homicide between them but when they separated they ceased to pay it.

In tribes in which the tribesmen, except for some small lineages of strangers (*jodak*) intermingled with the dominant clan, are all members of the same clan, such as Kanyamkoyo tribe, compensation for homicide was not, or was rarely, paid, because the strangers had close kinship links with the dominant clan and would, I was told, have refused compensation in cattle, though they might have accepted a girl, since had they done so they would have emphasized a distinction they were anxious to obliterate. It was only in tribes in which there was beside the dominant clan other powerful lineages occupying their own lands within the tribal territory, as Gi Jokabou and Kabao in Alego, that *ar* was paid regularly for homicide and could be enforced by appeal to force. In other words, where there was considerable political cohesion, expressed in terms of clanship, the killing of a man was treated as a sin; where there were marked sectional enmities within the political unit of the tribe it was treated as a tort; and where there were social links but political separateness it was treated, unless it was a wanton act of individual homicide, as provocation to a feud but without moral disapproval or means of legal settlement.

The political boundary, which in its moral dimension signified a balanced hostility between adjacent tribal groups, had its material expression in the land. The tribe was a stretch of bush country, the home of buffalo,

[1] If a man of one tribe killed a man of a different tribe in a personal quarrel, and not in war, raiding, feud, or ritual demonstration, he might pay compensation in cattle, e.g. if a Kanyamkoyo man killed for some private reason a Kwia man who was taking cattle to his home in Kanyamkoyo territory.

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
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the JoOwiło of Uyoma; and is not approved, though sometimes permitted, even between such fraternal clans as the dominant clans of Kanyamuyo, Kisumu, Kadem, Karungu, and Kabwor. The young men are rebelling against the prohibition. Likewise I was told that through the JokOwiło marry into the fraternal clan of Omio (Asembo) it is thought that such marriage may not be very fruitful.

Nevertheless in those big clans within which marriage is prohibited or where it is not approved between fraternal clans the custom of *ondo* is permitted. *Ondo* is a socially recognised love-making in which the youths court the girls and bring them to the *simbo* or bachelor's hut and sleep with them there and have relations with them *intra cruro*. Thus the KoAlwadha and KoOkelo lineages of the JoOwiło clan of Uyoma may *ondo* between them, a practice said to date from two generations ago; likewise the KoGumbo and KaDepir lineages of the KaNyikal clan of Seme, though in their case it is said from the last generation only; likewise the JokOwidi and JokOgol of the KaRachuonyo of Kanyamuyo. In these instances were a girl to be made pregnant her lover could not marry her.

When two lineages of the same clan are becoming widely separated and are beginning to *ondo* between them it is done at first with discretion, because the elder men are opposed to the innovation, then in open affairs in the bachelors' hut. Finally marriage is envisaged and perhaps eventually permitted, in the first place the less approved form of marriage by abduction (*par*) and then the ordinary form (*nako*). When marriage begins to take place, and even more when it has the approval of the elders, it may be taken to be an indication of political fission, for it was found among the Luo, as among the Nuer, that political values are stated in the language of kinship and that the politico-territorial system is reflected in the lineage system.

A man may not marry a *nyakwar*, sister's daughter, in the classificatory sense if her mother was a member of his maximal lineage but he can marry her if her mother belonged to a collateral maximal lineage of his clan, though even then the elders do not always approve. The general principle of exogamy is that a man must not marry any woman whom he regards as a *wuoi*, a cognatic relative, and Luo reckon kinship as widely as to exclude a man from marrying into his maternal grandmother's clan and his maternal great grandmother's maximal lineage, though it must be said that there is often disagreement, especially between men of different generations about the permissibility of marriage between distantly related persons, that is to say, about borderline cases. In spite of some divergence of opinion however it may be stated that for the Luo, people are either *wuoi*, kinsfolk, or *mangu*, enemies. A man cannot marry his and therefore must marry an 'enemy'. Hence when marriage is allowed between two groups it means that there is no kinship between them or that kinship is no longer recognised between them for purposes of exogamy and this, as said above, is an indication of political opposition, so that one often hears Luo say of a neighbouring tribe, e.g. a Kanyamuyo man of the Kwia tribe, 'They are enemies, we marry them'. In other words adjacent tribes are structurally opposed segments in the tribal system

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
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while relations of a personal kind and kinship links between individuals run across their common frontiers and are compelled to do so by the exogamous rules obtaining in Luo society.

Several of the clans and maximal lineages possess sacred spears and other objects believed to have belonged to their founders. The best known sacred spear (*nyag mo lima*, spear of sacrifice) is the one Alego, the spear of Alego, the founder of the JoAlego clan. In Ugenya the JoKaGor clan have several such spears and there are others in possession of the lineages descended from Ouanya to the south of the gulf. Where there are important stranger lineages in a tribe they may also have their sacred objects, e.g. in Alego the KaLuo and the JoKOpilo have sacred spears and the JoAgoro have a sacred stone and a sacred pot handed down from their founders. These objects are symbols of the unity of a clan or lineage and, by extension, of the tribe or tribal segment in which it is dominant, and they were used ritually in time of war or of common calamity, such as drought and invasion by locusts. They seem generally, if not always to be held by the senior line (*dho ot mo duong'*) of a lineage or clan and are kept either in a granary or in hiding in the bush. The senior line is often called on by junior collateral lines to perform important sacrifices for them and the senior lineage ought to provide the sacrificial beast at ceremonies common to all the lineages. I was told also that while each lineage had its own *pany*, 'father of the land' the *ruoth pany* of the senior lineage had chief prestige among them.

Some clans and lineages have certain ritual prohibitions (*kwer*), mostly on certain foods, particularly kidneys and liver. The Luo do not give the impression of attaching much importance to them and if a man and a woman observe the same taboo it is not in itself a bar to marriage. Reference must also be made to clan and lineage honorific, or praise, names. The *nying pach* is generally derived from the name of a paternal ancestor whose name is a lineage eponym, e.g. Obwiri (see the chart of the JoOwiti clan) can be called, according to the circumstances, *wuod* (son of) KwObwiri, *wuod* KaJoju, and *wuod* Owiti. These names are much used at communal gatherings, especially at large beer parties.

A feature of clanship which would seem to be of some importance is the annual inter-lineage wrestling. Unfortunately, I only became aware of these shortly before I left Lanland and had afterwards no further opportunity to enquire further into the custom, or to discover whether it is practised all over Lanland or only in some tribal areas, such as Ugenya where the closely related collateral lineages wrestle for practice prior to the wrestling matches between the big lineages. Thus the KoOwiri are matched against the KwOkeng, then these two lineages together against the KaKwanga and KaMudia, and so on. The lineages send a messenger to challenge the other party and when they meet an elder presides over the joint hours and the exhibition matches between lineage wrestlers on each side. The matches are said to occasion much excitement among the spectators.

The sketch given above of the Luo clan is only an outline delineating features of it. A little detail is filled in here and there in the following

3: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1934) 1950 FL11 Luo FL11

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE LUO OF KENYA

E. E. EVANS-PRITCHARD

[1] THIS paper forms part of a short general account of the Luo based on a rapid survey made in 1936. The survey was financed by the *Leverhulme Grants Committee*. An earlier part, describing the political structure of the Luo, has recently appeared in another journal.[1]

Apart from information provided by Father Hermann[2] and a fuller account by Mr. K. C. Shaw,[3] early accounts of Luo marriage are slight, and in some cases misleading. Mr. Shaw's account covers a good part of the ground covered by the present paper, but it is useful to have two independent accounts, especially as both were written from information obtained through interpreters. When I went to Kenya I did not expect to visit the Luo and I had not therefore read Mr. Shaw's article. Mr. Shaw and I disagree in a number of particulars in the overlapping parts of our papers. It does not follow from this that either of us is wrong in our statements because, as Mr. Shaw points out, there is some variation in local custom in the different tribes of Lueland. My own information on this particular subject was mostly obtained from the Alego tribe of Central Kavirondo. In the main I have followed the account given me by Pastor Ezekiel of that tribe. In doing so I have omitted much detail.

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Siwindhe

[136] [192] Courtship and marriage are intimately connected with the custom of making love to girls (*nade*) in the *siwindhe* or bachelors' dormitory, the last custom to the entrance to a Luo homestead. Youths arrange with girls to visit them there at night, and when a youth is visited by one of his sweethearts the other young men of the house sleep elsewhere. He plays with the girl and has intercourse between her thighs and they sleep together. He must not penetrate her—that is regarded as shameful, and it will be known on the day of her marriage. If a girl comes from a distance to visit her lover she may spend several nights with him in the *siwindhe*. A girl may have several lovers in different homesteads whom she visits from time to time; she pleases herself in these matters. The young men will not quarrel about her, nor will her father and brothers interfere in her love affairs. She may continue the practice throughout the stages of her marriage to another man right up to the *rire*, the final ceremony of marriage. I was told that a girl does not usually visit the *siwindhe* more often than once or twice [533] a month. Occasionally the lover employs a harpist to entertain the girl and his friends on one of her visits, and there is singing and dancing. Between the songs youths, and sometimes girls also, stand up and boast of their virtues, of the number of their friends and sweethearts, of their wealth, and of their families and lineages, and when they have finished they throw a gift to the harpist, maybe to-day a shilling. Other youths then try to outdo them in boasts and generosity.

[1] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Luo Tribes and Clans', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 1940.

[2] H. Hermann, 'Some Customs of the Luos (or Nilotic Kavirondo) Dying in South Kavirondo', *Anthropos*, 1908.

[3] K. C. Shaw, 'Some Preliminary Notes on Luo Marriage Customs', *J.R.A.I.* 67 (1937), 1950.

3: Evans-Pritchard E-S (1934) 1950 FL11 Lon FL11

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animals paid varies according to the circumstances of the time. From the information recorded by early authorities (Johnston, Hobley, Northcote, Sims, and Hartmann) it appears that before cattle plague had destroyed much of the Luo livestock at the end of last century, anything between twenty and forty head of cattle were paid. Since then, until recently, bridewealth has fluctuated between two or three and six or seven head of cattle. One gathers from Shaw's account that in 1911 round about twenty cattle were regarded as a suitable bridewealth. My own inquiries in 1936 led me to believe that at that time the number of cattle paid might be expected to be somewhere between fifteen and twenty.

They fall into two parts, the *ahe kaka* and the *ahe i kaka*. The *ahe kaka*, the animals the husband pays first, are those which are named and earmarked for certain relatives of the bride. They comprise the basic minimum which has to be paid if the marriage is to be concluded. These are the *ahet nam gi nyathet*, the cow of the mother and its calf, *ahet nam gi nyathet*, the cow of the father and its calf, *ahet utum*, the cow of the love, a female calf which goes to the father's brother, *ahet nino*, the cow of the fresh milk, *thum dhoi*, a bull for the father, *rwath pala*, the calf of the bottle, which is paid so that if any of the bridewealth cattle die in the home of the bride's parents they may eat the meat—before it is paid they send the meat to the bridegroom and he has to replace the beast; *rwath dher*, the ox provided for meat at the *dhero* ceremony, and *rwath ringo*, the ox of the meat, an animal killed by the bridegroom's people to provide the mother of the bride with meat—it is killed in her home but there is no special time when it has to be presented. Except for the cow, and perhaps a calf with it, which goes to the paternal uncle and the ox slain to feast the visiting girls at the *dhero* ceremony, all these animals are taken by the parents. The terms by which they are described differ in different parts of Luoland.

I believe that in the south of the Kavirondo gulf no distinction is made between the earmed and the unearmed cattle, but it is a very important distinction in Alego, where the husband's jaguo and brothers are most careful, when they take the earmed animals to the home of the bride's father, to leave no doubt in his mind which particular animals he is receiving. He cannot then get an additional animal by claiming later that one of those which count in all marriages he paid has not been paid. The husband pays one or two of the *ahe kaka* at a time and it generally takes about two years for him to hand them all over. In addition he has to pay the *ahe i kaka*. The number of these extra cattle is not fixed and is reached by negotiation between the husband's people and his father-in-law. Nevertheless there is a conventional average, in 1936 between five and seven head of cattle. It is about the wild extra beast or two that the haggling discussions take place. Some of the *ahe i kaka* are paid directly after the *ahet puon* (which counts as one of them) has been handed over but the husband does not pay them, if he can avoid it, until he has settled all the earmed claims, as he may otherwise find that he has to give more cattle than he bargained for. In addition to cattle the husband's people pay a number of goats, between five and ten. The husband may not be able to pay all these animals for some years, and if his father-in-law is friendly he will not press him too hard to settle a small outstanding debt. The final animal perhaps will not be paid till the wife's daughter is married.

Although the father of the bride gets the bulk of the bridewealth, most of the animals will be used to marry wives for his sons, and he may give one or two to his

S: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11

I must also express my indebtedness to Mr. Mayon, Collector of Nandi, for much information regarding that tribe, which is particularly uncommunicative on these matters.

I have no doubt that, as years go by, many of the matters dealt with herein may become much clearer, but I have thought it best to publish the material without further delay, as it may help to stimulate further research, and I also fear that as civilization develops, many of the strange customs and legends may become lost; in fact, there are already signs that the younger generation of natives are losing interest in the old order of things.

LEGENDS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE JA-LUO RACE.

Many savage tribes have legends or myths to account for their origin, and I believe I am correct in stating that, in Africa, it is generally among those of Bantu origin that such myths are found. However, in the whole of the country in the vicinity of the east side of the Nyanza, with which I am fairly well acquainted, with one exception, no trace of a definite legend has been discovered among the Bantu tribes (the exception being the Kadimo belief that their common ancestor was a huge python). Among the Ja-Luo, however, there is a very wide-spread belief in one Apidhlo, who was the Adam of the comparatively limited area of which these people have any cognizance.

I venture to give three versions of the same myth taken down from three chiefs living some forty miles apart. Each of these authorities also gave me a genealogical tree of considerable interest, inasmuch as they contain what may be a very probable solution of the origin of the names of the Ja-Luo tribes in Kavirondo. Of course there are discrepancies, but when one considers the way this story and the genealogical tables have been handed down verbally from generation to generation, one wonders that the three versions present so many features in common.

Version I from Ugulu chief of Uasbwa.

Apidhlo was the father of all the Kavirondo people. He descended from the heavens, and the day he reached the earth, the various kinds of animals also came down from above.

Apidhlo descended on Ramogi, or Lamogi, Hill, a long way north of Uganda, and he afterwards died at the same place. He descended with one woman, whose name is forgotten, and by her he had two sons and four daughters. These sons were named Ramogi and Anyanga, and each married two of his sisters.

Ramogi migrated southward, and came and settled on a hill in Kadimo country (near the mouth of the river Nzoia); this hill is called after him to this day. His offspring founded the Ja-Luo race; most of the names of his sons being the names of the various tribes which were founded by them.

Anyanga, the other son of Apidhlo, stayed in the country of his father and became the progenitor of the Ragoyo and Konyoro. On the day that Apidhlo

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11

reached the earth, among the other animals that accompanied him were a bull, a cow, and a calf; he also brought *mtama* and other food-bearing seeds and plants, and there is especially mentioned besides, a tree called "Were," and out of the wood of the Were tree he made two wooden bowls. He then milked the cow into one of the wooden bowls, and, from ignorance he caught the cow's urine into the other bowl; this done, he poured the milk into a gourd and left the bowl of cow's urine in the sun, and then rested till the evening. At sundown he churned the milk that was in the gourd, collected the butter, and put it on one side; he then brought in the bowl of urine and mixed it with the buttermilk that remained in the gourd. Then, being hungry, he took the mixture and made some gruel with *mtama* meal, cooked and drank it; after drinking it, he passed urine for the first time since he had reached the earth, and this is the origin of the Ja-Luo custom of mixing milk with the cow's urine which prevails to this day.

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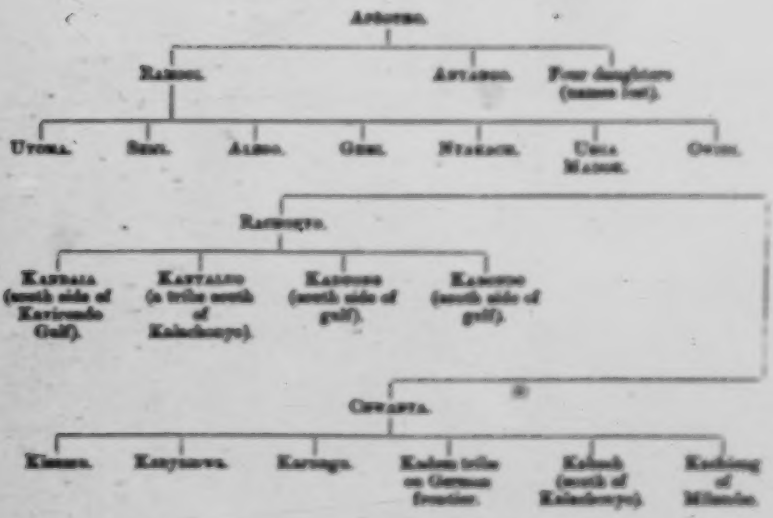
GENEALOGY OF JA-LUO.

Version I of Upoto Ndiak of Usoken.



Version II. Upoto chief of Kavirondo.

Apóthe was the ancestor of all men; he descended to the earth from above, and brought with him two head of cattle, some fowls, and seeds of *mtama*, *ma-wele*, and *wimbi*. He found the tobacco plant growing on earth; the elephant gave him the sweet potato and beans. He also brought the knowledge of making fire by rubbing two pieces of wood together, and he taught the Ja-Luo to mix cow's urine with the milk.

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Loo FL11

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He reached the earth in the country away to the north of the lake, and died in that country; at his death, he turned into a rock. Apiddito had supernatural powers and possessed the power to turn into a rock at will. When he was old, the Ja-Loo conspired to kill him, but for a long time nothing came of it, because they were afraid of him; but one day sickness overcame him; the conspirators sent a girl to see if he was really sick, as they thought it would be a good opportunity to kill him. She took a small horn, used for cupping blood, in her hand, and, while talking to him, she placed the cupping horn on his shadow; to her surprise it drew blood from the shadow. She returned and told her friends that, if they wanted to kill Apiddito, they must not touch his body, but spear his shadow; they did so, and he died and turned into a rock, which the Ja-Loo afterwards considered to possess special virtues for sharpening spears on.

Ramogi was the first member of the Ja-Loo race to come to Kavirondo, and he built in Kadimo country, near what is now the village of the chief Asara.

The Ja-Mwa (or Basira Kavirondo) are descended from Anyanga and came to Kavirondo before the Ja-Loo. They also came from the north, but belong to a different stock, the Baganda and Ba-Soga.

The Nandi came from the Ja-Lango. The Ja-Loo on the south side of Kavirondo Gulf originally lived on the north side, and crossed over by canoes.

The Kelou and various Ja-Loo clans on the Kitoto plain are the descendants of one Kaura, who is said to have come from Masai land, and to have married the sister of Rachuoyo and settled down in the Kitoto plain; they are to this day often grouped together under the name Ja-Kaura.

Gumi, Lego, Sakwa, Kadimo, Ugenya, the founders of the tribes of the same name, were not sons of Ramogi, but were collaterally descended from Apiddito.

Version III.

This version was obtained from Gori Kogalo, chief of Kanyamwea (Ja-Loo) on the south side of Kavirondo Gulf.

Apiddito was the father of all mankind; and he, the sun, the wind, and the moon appeared on earth together; the father of the sun was dead. Apiddito brought with him to the earth a spear, a shield, and fire. The buffalo and the cattle came out of the sea (probably meaning the Nyanza), and were herded by mankind, but the buffalo broke away, and took to the woods, refusing to become tame as the cattle did; he also brought various grain, the crimbi he found growing on earth in the grass; he found tobacco and the sweet potato growing in elephant dung.

Shortly after their arrival, Apiddito ordered the moon to kill an ox, but the moon refused; he then told the sun, and then the wind, they also refused, so he killed the ox himself with a blow from his fist, and then ate the meat, offering some to the sun, moon, and wind, but they all refused to eat, and he was very angry, so they fled back to the heavens and have stayed there ever since. Apiddito told his

S. Hickey C1-5 (ca. 1950) 1981 FT.11 Loss FT.11

Genealogy of the Ju-Loo.

Version 2 of Ojada Kwenda.

Ambrose (had one wife, name unknown).
Clarence.
Ronnie (name of first Loo settled in Kwenda, had five wives).
Lucy (the Band said to be descended from Lucy).
Clarence.
Stephen.
Ambrose.
Clarence.
Stephen.
(missing).
(missing).
Kathryn (name of tribe south side of gulf).
Karen (tribe south side of gulf).
Kathleen (tribe, south side of gulf).
Stephanie (now probably tribe of Ju-Loo near Canadian border).
Clarence.
Dora (name of tribe).
Clary Moore (the Loo name for the Wanta or Sigma people).
Clarice (name of tribe).
Karen.
Great Isle (tribe, name as the other tribe, i.e. the Great tribe on south side of Kwenda gulf).
Karen (name of tribe).
Kathryne (name of tribe on south side of Kwenda gulf).
Stephen.
Dora (probable name).
Kathryn (name of clan of Kwenda tribe).
Stephen (name of clan of Kwenda tribe).
Ambrose.
Kathryn (name of clan of tribe).
Ambrose.
Erin.
Stephen (probably Native).
Ambrose.
Stephen.
Clarence.
Stephen (name of small clan of Kwenda tribe).
Clarice.
Clarence.
Stephen (name of present chief of Kwenda clan, age over 70).
Clarence.
Clarence.

in Kwenda and Beach.

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Genealogy of the Ja-Luo.

Version 2 of Gori Kapolo.

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Loo FL11

children that he had left a beautiful country in the heavens where the people were all bright like fire, and that when they were dead, they would all go and meet these people.

Banagi, the great grandson of Apidibbo, taught the Ja-Luo the custom of mixing cow's urine with the milk.

Mbonga, the eldest son of Banagi, was the first member of the Ja-Luo to migrate southward into Kavirondo, and his brothers followed him; upon their arrival, they found the Bantu Kavirondo in possession of the land, but gradually drove them back.

The Bantu Kavirondo are descended from one Mugirango.

The Masai are descended from a Ja-Luo youth who, when out one day herding cattle, absconded into the woods, driving off the cattle; a woman who was lazy, and would not cultivate, crept away and joined him, and they became the progenitors of the Masai; they live by eating lambs and drinking milk to this day.

The Nandi and Lumbwa are descended from Alungé, a son of Banagi.

Rajuki, a son of Apidibbo, is the ancestor of all the other people on earth, Europeans, etc.

This account was given me by an old chief living away in the hills to the south of Kavirondo Gulf, a man who has probably not seen half a dozen Europeans in the whole of his life. He told me that, in his youth, the old chiefs had many more legends, but the young men of to-day took but little interest in such things, and they were all rapidly being forgotten. He confided to me that his neighbours imputed to him the power of being able to transform himself at will into the shape of an ox and other animals, but he gravely assured me that these absurdities were quite unfounded, and were a source of great embarrassment to him.

The version of the legend, given above, differs considerably from those previously recounted, and many new names appear. Most of the new names, however, are the names of tribes living in South Kavirondo, or Ugoye as it is often called, *e.g.*, Nyanibago, Kelandonyo, Kalondo, Kabuch, Kadou, Uchiong. As these were once neighbours of his ancestors, their names would be more likely to be remembered.

There is, I think, enough internal evidence to show that this is really a very ancient genealogy, brought down from the Nile valley by the people when they migrated to the south.

An examination of the three versions of the genealogy of the Ja-Luo just given will lay bare many discrepancies, the presence of which, to my mind, gives an air of great genuineness to the information, and is, in a way, proof of the age of the myth.

Like the genealogy of the Uganda kings given in Mr. Roscoe's paper,[1] and, for the matter of that, like many other genealogies of world-wide fame in the ancient history of more civilized countries, we have in the Ja-Luo genealogy a succession of mythical personages and demigods at one end of the line, and at the other end,

[1] *Journ. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xxxii, p. 25, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," Plates I and II.

8:Shaw G-5 (ca. 1930)1932 FL11 Luo FL11

SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES ON LUO MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

By K. C. Shaw.

I. Introductory.

This account of Luo marriage customs was given to me by half a dozen elders of the Luo tribe, living in a location called Nyakore about seven miles from Kisumu. All of them were over fifty, and two at least must have been nearing seventy, if they were not older. The question of the age of my informants may seem irrelevant, but in fact it is not. In the first place their advanced age, an age to counted among primitive people, entailed that they had been brought up, and had passed their early manhood during a period when the customs of the tribe had still not been affected by contact with European civilisation. Their view of life, and of their duties as members of the Luo tribe was the view that had been taken by their fathers and their grandfathers before them. In this they differed from their own sons and grandsons whose attitude towards tribal customs has been and continues to be profoundly modified by white influences. This falling away from the traditional ways on the part of the younger generation is not only a source of grief to the old men: it is also a source of profound annoyance. For it robs them of a large part of the prestige and authority which among the Luo, as among other primitive people, is traditionally the due of those who attain to a ripe age. In the old days this prestige and this authority carried great weight. It was the head and fount of power in the tribe, and the exercise and enjoyment of this power became the chief interest of a man's life as his years increased and his sons grew up and took from his shoulders the family duties and cares of his earlier days. It follows that the decay in the importance of the old men, which is such a marked feature in nearly all the Kenya tribes to-day, makes the elders not only resentful, but also very willing to dwell on the old days, the good days, when their word was law, and the young were still in due subjection to the old and the wise. For these two reasons then, their exact personal knowledge of the traditional mode of life of the tribe, and their interest in the days when this mode of life was still the accepted one, the advanced age of my informants was a valuable factor. Also it pleased and flattered them to be appealed to as authorities, and from the beginning to the end of our intercourse they were only too pleased to tell me all they could of the days when they were young. Apart from a natural inclination to view the past through rosy spectacles they took great pains to give me an accurate account of what the tribal customs used to be before the white man came. Long discussions used to go on over points of detail, and it was only when they were all agreed that I was allowed

to write down the authorized version of whatever ceremony it was that I wished to describe. Moreover they warned me not only that customs differed slightly from clan to clan and location to location in North and Central Kavirondo, but that the Luo who had crossed the Gulf and gone to live in South Kavirondo differed in a good many ways from the Luo who had remained on the north side of the water. It must therefore be understood that the customs which I am about to describe are those of a group of Luo clans living in a small area in Central Kavirondo, and that there may be discrepancies between my account of these customs and those of other observers in other parts of the tribal area.

II. The Marriage Ceremony.

In the old days, before the Europeans took over the government of the Luo country, it seems that a man did not normally marry until he was nearer forty than thirty, and girls did not marry until they were nineteen or twenty. In the case of a man this delay was apparently connected with his duties as a warrior. It was considered that a man fought better if he were free from the ties of married life. Though the Luo were never a fighting tribe in the grand manner like the Masai they had to make hundreds of years long pressing southwards through the surrounding Bantu tribes. Hunting for fresh land or even for cattle alone, and the consequent reprisals on the part of the raided, played an important part in tribal life, and every able-bodied man from the age of seventeen or eighteen up to the time of his marriage had to hold himself in constant readiness for a foray. The term for a man of fighting age was *nyarombo*, that for a married man *jatt*, while that for a man who delayed to marry until much later than usual was *mamulo*. After marriage a man seems to have been exempt from all warlike duties and allowed to settle down and devote himself entirely to his family life.

It is likely that this postponement of marriage to a comparatively late age was, apart from its connection with the defence of the tribe, an instance of the reluctance of the older men to surrender even a part of their wealth and power to their sons. A man could not marry without his father's permission, for it was only from his father (except under special circumstances into which I need not enter here) that he could obtain the cattle with which to acquire a bride, and primitive fathers are often no more anxious than some civilized ones to part with large quantities of their worldly goods for the benefit of their children. There was, however, no hard and fast convention as to the age at which a man might marry. Circumstances altered cases. A mother, for instance, who was without an unmarried daughter, and who wanted another woman to help her in the household work and cultivation, might insist that her son should bring a wife into the family, even if he had not yet reached ordinary marriageable age. Again if there

8:Shaw G-9 (ca. 1930)1932 FL11 Loc FL11

dowry had been paid, he was then enabled to spread his payments of the bride-price over a longer period than would otherwise have been possible. Also the fact that the girl was with child prevented her from being carried off by any other man; apparently a not unheard of occurrence. 583

The wedding feast itself—the *kiriya*—took place in the bridegroom's *dala*. The bride arrived accompanied by her sisters, or, if her sisters were too young to go with her, by her brothers' wives. She was also attended by one older woman, perhaps a married sister, who acted as a chaperone. It was the special duty of this older woman to see that the bride was properly treated, and to make herself polite to the father and mother of the bridegroom. But with this exception older men and women were never included in the bride's party. Any man who attended himself to it would have been laughed at for mixing himself up with an affair that concerned women only. On the other hand not only did the bridegroom's sisters attend the feast but, as well, all his brothers, half brothers, and first cousins (in other words all the people he called "brother"), the wives of his brothers, and all his male friends. 585

As a rule the wedding feast lasted only one day, but if the guests had come long distances, it might last two or even three days. The feast consisted of porridge and meat. The young people were not given beer, but the bridegroom's mother usually brewed a small quantity for her husband and his brothers.

The meat provided consisted of the flesh of a bull which was cut up and apportioned according to certain definite rules. The division was the duty of the bridegroom's father, who first of all cut a small piece from the neck and sent it into the bridegroom's mother, who waited in her hut to receive it. He then cut more small pieces from the neck and scattered them outside and inside her hut. This was an offering to the ancestral spirits, and was accompanied by the following prayer:— 585 782

Dho wamiyo dhiang mar dhalowga iwagi dalo ahi wahom kad jachiew ahoto ahi kichiko kowro gi wowro gidhoga wad ringowo ngeno chuo wuru kiriyga mamok chuk mare gimo mother dalo dalo.

Prayer and offering were together intended to placate the ancestral spirits and to persuade them to bless the marriage. After this the right fore leg was cut off and placed in the centre of the mother's hut. This having had a special name, *kadjachiew* and was a gift to all the ancestral spirits. It was afterwards eaten by the bridegroom's father and mother, and part of it was dried and sent to the bride's mother.

The whole of the breast, with the exception of a small piece reserved for the bridegroom's brothers, is sent to the brothers of the 585 189

8:Shaw G-5 (ca. 1930) 1932 FL11 Lon,FL11

bride. It is a curious fact that only young men (perpetual bachelors) may eat this part of the animal. The elders told me that in Gem, Alego, Seme, Upoma, Asembo, Kadimo and Uyoma the breast is set aside to be eaten in the early morning by the friends of the bridegroom. But in Kano, Kisumu, Nyakach, and Kabondo it is used as I have described.

One fore-leg and one hind-leg were sent to the parents of the bride, and two small pieces of the liver were also allotted to them. The rest of the liver was eaten by the elder men living in the dala, and the lungs, heart, and stomach were divided and disposed of in the same way as the liver. The thick part of the stomach was also the perquisite of the elder men, who also ate the contents of the small intestine mixed with blood and used as a relish. This concoction was called kirkuri and was highly esteemed. Half of it was sent to the bride's father. Here again there was a difference between the customs of Alego, Gem, Seme, Uyoma, Sakwa, Kadimo, and Uyoma on the one hand, and those of Kisumu, Kano, Nyakach, and Kabondo on the other. For in the former districts kirkuri was eaten by men and women, whereas in the latter districts only the men were allowed to eat it. This difference may well provide an interesting clue to the past history of these two divisions.

The kidney was divided into two parts, one being sent to the bride's parents, and the other half being eaten by the parents of the bridegroom. The ribs and loins were the portion of the women guests, who were also allotted the kidney and the pancreas which men are forbidden to eat, for fear of contracting the disease known as kipkwonde. Women with child may not eat these portions in case the child is a boy.

After the kimuga was over the girl was regarded as having finally passed into the fully married state. But even so there were still certain ceremonies which had to be observed before she could take up her residence in her own hut, specially built for her by her husband and there assume the normal duties of a married woman.

The building of this hut was never begun until the wedding feast was over. While it was being constructed the girl slept first in the sister's hut, and later in her mother-in-law's hut, and before it was finished the girl returned to her own home for a short visit, taking with her that part of the dried fore-leg of the bull (*kul pachon*) which had been set aside for her mother at the wedding feast, as well as other presents of food. It was explained to me that these gifts were in the nature of a compensation to the mother for her absence from her daughter's wedding feast, and they may indicate that in earlier times it was the custom for the mother to accompany her daughter on that occasion. While the girl was at home the mother prepared a

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INTRODUCTION

This piece of work is the result of a survey carried out in Nyahera among Luo people living round the African Inland Mission, seven miles north-west of the township of Kisumu. This investigation has provided a basis from which generalizations could be made by comparing the conditions in this locality with those in other parts of the Luo country.

Superstitions—beliefs in magic and the work of spirits—are common among the Luo people; and it appears to me that any differences in the conditions existing in various localities can be attributed to the extent to which Christian influence and economic pressure have modified the people's beliefs and manner of life.

Local differences may also be due to customs acquired from the numerous tribes contacted by the Luo in their migration. Remnants of these customs and social practices may still be found in the assimilated tribal groups.

This investigation originated from a desire to study the social development of a Luo girl. I have therefore put forward such information as I think might interest anyone engaged in educational work among the people of this tribe. I hope too that it may interest students in attempting to solve problems which would further the advance of education and broaden the outlook of parents in relation to their children.

The material put forward leaves an enormous field for comparison, criticism, and independent investigation by serious students of Luo society. The nature of the problems dealt with may also make the information appear fragmentary; but I have attempted, within the serious limitations involved, to provide a structure on which

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CONCLUSION

121 In order that educational plans may be effective, attention should be paid to those features of social life which most nearly affect education. 'The Luo Girl' is not an attempt to record facts of exclusive interest to the sociologist nor to the psychologist, but it aims to give a picture of the factors at work in the character-building of Luo girls and in the shaping of their attitude to the society in which they live. In short, this book has been written to place certain data at the disposal of those interested in suggesting ways in which the lives of the Luo people can be improved both spiritually and materially. Plans for increased education for Luo girls will no doubt be more effective if the factors which help to shape the character and the attitude of the girls are carefully examined. The customs which have been described are [184] not static and some of them have already ceased to retain their meaning in some districts. Thus there may be wide differences in customs among the Luo people, but it is the principles underlying these customs which should be of interest to us today.

Luo society, like many African societies, is undergoing change. The educator's task is a difficult one. It is only through a careful analysis of the factors which affect its social make-up that he can make an enlightened contribution to its improvement. I have therefore endeavoured in the foregoing chapters to put forward such material as might be of some help in making a balanced plan for the new developments which will affect Luo society.

[illegible]